New-York Tribune.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1905.

THE·YEAR·IN·EDUCATION·

REVIEW OF 1904-'05.

The development in educational methods in the last year, while it has exhibited little of the sensational or spectacular, has been steady and definite. The two most widely advertised occurrences in educational affairs, the gifts of $10,000,000 each by John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, will, according to many of those who have watched the situation most carefully, have little effect on the general trend of education. On the other hand, the general advance in methods and ideals, though almost unnoticed except by those immediately interested, has been strong and constant. Old ideas have been more fully worked out, and at least one new purpose, which until recently was merely an unconscious trend, has become, with educational leaders, a conscious aim.

The principal educational development in this year, as in several years past, has been along the line of "education for efficiency," and among the broader educators "education for efficient service." The difference between the two, to the teacher, is largely one of ideal rather than of method, and to the pupil, of purpose than of training, so that practically those who worked largely for the training of the individual machine and those who worked for the development of a stronger social factor have found their immediate aims identical. It is in developing the ideal of efficiency, in all its ramifications, that almost all the noticeable changes have been made or planned in the methods of both higher and lower schools. The changes have, perhaps, been on a more general line in colleges and universities, and have been concerned more largely with details in the elementary schools.

The development toward "education for efficiency" in the higher schools has been twofold. The most conscious movement, the one most discussed and most intelligently acted upon, has been that toward closer contact between students and teachers. The other, which is as yet almost unrecognized by casual observers, but is felt and understood by those of the widest experience and deepest insight, has been toward what might be called, to employ a mechanical term, a "standardizing" of methods.

The first of these movements, that toward a closer relation between teacher and pupil, has been growing rapidly for four or five years, and in the last year has borne fruit in several ways. It is considered the most pronounced educational movement of the day by Dr. James H. Canfield, at present librarian of Columbia University, and for some years previously president of Kansas State University. While not immediately engaged in teaching, Dr. Canfield is a specialist in educational methods and has unrivalled opportunities for observing the currents of thought among educational leaders.

"This movement, which to some extent follows recognized European methods," he said recently, "appears widely in this country, and shows itself in two important ways. Many schools are making mechanical changes in their methods, looking toward smaller classes, with greater opportunity of contact between the teachers and individual members of their classes. Princeton is now introducing the tutorial system, in which each student is placed under, or is understood to be in charge of, a particular teacher. That method, up to a certain point, will result, I think, in great advantages to the student. It must not, however, be carried too far, or it will have a tendency to cause narrowness of view.

"But the most important manifestation of this movement is shown in the changed attitude of the great specialists. There is a distinct spirit among them, these days, to undergo inconvenience, even to make personal sacrifice for the sake of greater contact with the pupils. Today the specialists are teaching, and to one who has been familiar with educational methods for any length of time the fact must appear noteworthy. Until a few years ago, and ever since we first began to hear of specialists, the head of a department in a university would go to the trustees with a demand like this: 'I wish you would provide a teaching force for my department. I have no time to be bothered with teaching the elements of science to lightheaded boys. Give me teachers, so that I can devote my time to investigation.' But we hear little of that these days. The professors are recognizing more and more the importance of the teaching and the wide influence it gives, and they are willing to make correspondingly great sacrifices to enable them to do it. This attitude means much.

"As to the standardizing of methods," Dr. Canfield continued in reply to a question, "I do believe that there is such a movement under way in American colleges, but up to this time it has been largely unconscious, and has been caused chiefly by the pressure of outside influences.

"By standardizing of methods and courses, I take it, is meant an agreeing as to the value of courses in any subject, so that a student may transfer from one school to another easily, without loss of time or standing, and without burdensome examinations. There is undoubtedly such a movement. Men are working more and more for what is to be learned rather than for a degree. No one university can have all the great teachers even in one subject—there are, of course, not enough great teachers in any subject to go around, and a school is fortunate that has even one—so that the student will go, and is going, from one teacher to another, learning from each the things he can teach best. In the end matters will naturally be so arranged that he can get his degree wherever he may happen to be when he completes his course of study.

"There are several other powerful agencies working toward this standardization. One of the oldest of these is the growth of great schools, such as the Chicago University and the State universities throughout the West. It was predicted that these schools would overwhelm and destroy the smaller colleges, but the result has been exactly the reverse. The smaller schools have risen to the emergency and provided better teachers and better courses. They have all been raised toward the standard set by the more influential institutions.

"There is also beginning to be a process of elimination. The greatest factor in this will be the gift of $10,000,000 by Mr. Rockefeller to the general education fund. This money will go to those of the smaller colleges which measure up to a standard to be fixed by the general education board. And these schools, by the indorsement of that board, will have a higher standing in the minds of donors, while the rejected schools will be correspondingly lowered in the public mind, and will have greater difficulties in raising funds. Some of the Western States are now full to repletion of minor schools—I believe there are sixty-five that call themselves colleges in Ohio—there may be more; they make them out there over night, and I have not yet read the morning papers thoroughly—but such a number is ridiculous, and any weeding out must be beneficial to the final product of educated men and women, since the students will turn to the better schools.

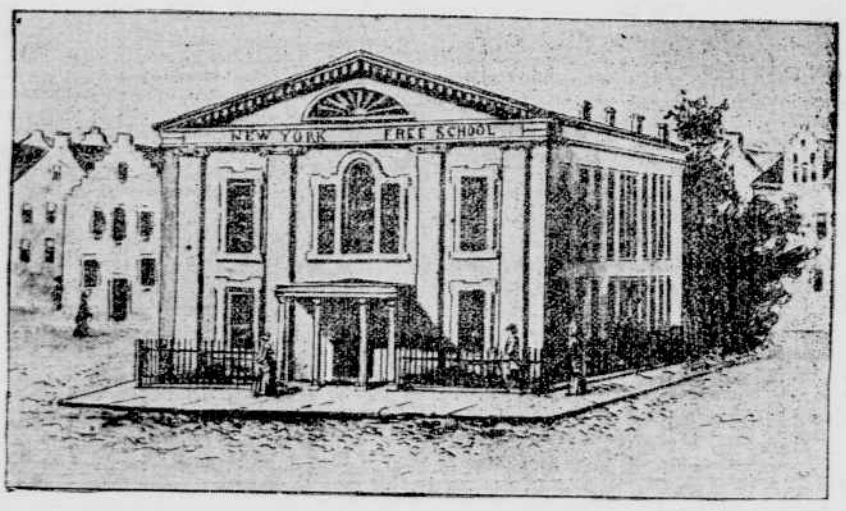
"This movement and Mr. Rockefeller's gift are somewhat along a line suggested by Dr. Eliot, of Harvard, as long ago as the summer of 1903. At that time he hoped for the establishment of a board which should act as a critic of schools, and furnish information as to their work and worthiness to givers, who might be unable to obtain trustworthy information unaided, so that gifts could be made more intelligently, and the effort which is now wasted in turning out half finished, almost useless product from the least worthy schools would be effectively applied.

"A fact of great importance in my own line," said Dr. Canfield, "is that there must soon be specialization in the greater libraries of the country. For a long time the object of all American librarians has been to get as many books, of any kind, as possible; but it is now becoming a question of selection. No library will have room for all the books that will be published in the next ten years. In Germany each great library, while fairly well equipped on all subjects, aims to be absolutely complete in one, its recognized specialty, and arrangements are such that in the group of universities each specialty is covered. So students travel from library to library, as they do from teacher to teacher. We are rapidly approaching the need of some such system in this country."

In the last two or three years there have been evidences that indicated a possible movement toward consolidation of the smaller schools, devoted to some particular subject, with the great universities, such as has been lately undertaken in the case of the Boston Institute of Technology and Harvard University. Leading educators, however, while admitting that the spirit of combination is in the air in other things, doubt if these consolidations are the result of any definite educational movement, but regard them as sporadic, and not significant of a general educational trend.

In the elementary schools the slogan "Education for efficiency" has been heard even more loudly than in the universities, but its application has been less in general principles than in details. There have been few changes in ideals, but great progress in methods.

"Education for efficiency," as defined by Superintendent Maxwell, of the New-York City schools, "means the development of each citizen first as an individual and second as a member of society. It means bodies kept fit for service by appropriate exercise. It means that each student shall be taught to use his hands deftly, to observe accurately, to reason justly, to express himself clearly. It means that he shall learn 'to live cleanly, happily and helpfully with those about him'; that he shall learn to co-operate with his fellows for far reaching and far distant ends, that he shall learn the everlasting truth of the words uttered two thousand years ago: 'No man liveth to himself.'



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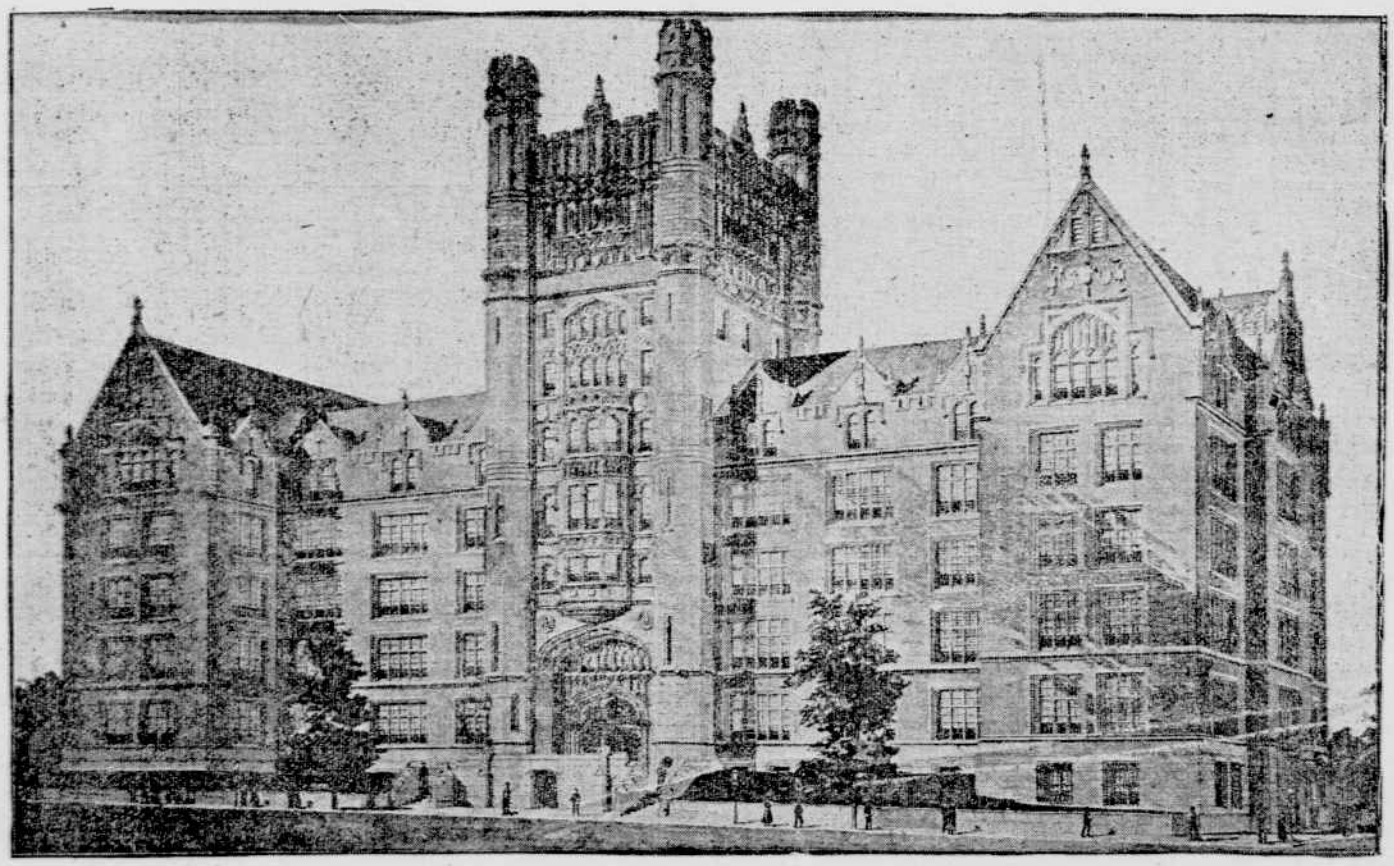

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